



For Immediate Release

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Library Director Outlines Raymond Library Renovation Additions



The J57 Turbojet Engine, which will be prominently displayed in the newly renovated Raymond Library (Picture Credit: Town of East Hartford)

(March 5, 2015) **East Hartford, CT** –Library users who have been patiently waiting for the newly renovated Raymond Library to open have a lot to look forward to when they step through the door, according to Director of Libraries Susan M. Hansen.

The \$9 million renovation, which was spearheaded by Mayor Marcia A. Leclerc, will see a 14,000 square foot expansion, in addition to a complete renovation of the building from the late 1800s.

The renovation, which is one of the hallmarks of the Mayor's administration, saw Mayor Leclerc change the original 14,000 square-foot expansion into an additional full-scale renovation.

"Walking the place, we became aware that the library needed more than just the expansion," Mayor Leclerc said. "We wanted a library that could serve the needs of all ages."

Mayor Leclerc then championed the effort to find more funding and eventually procured the necessary \$4 million in bonding from the state to allow the newly expanded project to go forward, with help from State Rep. Henry Genga, D-East Hartford and Gov. Dannel P. Malloy.

Hansen said that as people start to flow through the library, which is expected to open in the end of spring, there will be various different changes to the makeup of the library that would bring the building into the future.

"One of the things we're excited about is our Maker's Space," Hansen said. "It's a room on the second floor where creativity can flow."

The newly added Maker's Space would allow people to use 3D-Printers, while also having other low-tech options for creativity.

"This is a movement that we are following that gives people the opportunity to create and teach people how to create things," Hansen said. "There are so many opportunities for that and could be anything from having a knitting club there, to inviting an artist to come in or have a speaker. The opportunities are endless."

Some of the other additions to the library are the upgraded children's section, which is complete with an aviation theme, a key aspect of the history of East Hartford.

The expansion of the children's area was a key aspect to the renovations, in addition to the opening of a rare books section and the prominent display of a J57 turbojet engine, a Pratt & Whitney engine produced from the 1950s-1960s.

While most of the funding came from bonding, a lot of the smaller things that will be in the library were a result of a donation campaign named "Everybody Loves Raymond."

Some of the biggest sponsors included the Lion's Club, who donated computers and various forms of technology, a \$30,000 donation from Farmington Bank, a \$20,000 from Pratt & Whitney and several different private investors, raising the minimum amount needed to stock the library with the essentials.

According to Mayor Leclerc, fundraising will continue, even when the library opens.

"Through the \$90,000 we raised in this campaign we were able to buy the essentials and the minimum we need to open," Hansen said. "But there's still a gap, and we would like to replace

the old furniture and some of the older computers, so we're still trying to reach our goal of \$150,000."

Mayor Leclerc is looking forward to the opening of the library, which she considers a gem of the community.

"Raymond Library is a cornerstone to the cultural and social infrastructure to this town and this renovation will allow this cornerstone to continue to hold up to the test of time," Leclerc said.

"This renovation will be another step towards preserving the history and culture of the Town of East Hartford."

Mayor Leclerc also said that this space would provide an opportunity for the community to gather and create a space for all ages.

"With a young adult area, children's area and a space for adults and seniors, there is something for everybody," Mayor Leclerc said. "People can meet in the meeting rooms and this will be a hub for every generation."

Starting Saturday March 28, the temporary space for the Raymond Library, located at the East Hartford Cultural Center at 50 Chapman Place, will close at 5 p.m. and only the Wickham Library will be open until the renovated Raymond Library opens in late spring.

Hours will be extended to compensate and Wickham Library will be open starting on March 30 from 9 a.m.-8 p.m., Monday-Thursday and Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

To donate to the "Everybody Loves Raymond" fundraising campaign, send checks payable to Raymond Library Company to 50 Chapman Place, East Hartford, CT, 06108.

For more information about the renovation, contact the library at 860-289-6429.